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SEN. MANSFIELD of Montana, 10-
cratic or in the Senate, qual as
something a Capitol Hill philosopher for
several ns, not the least of which ing
that, in nents of meditation, he sm a
pipe. Moreover, the senator speaks occa
ly in profound observation on both sen al,
and human nature. He did so the oth ay
when the Senate foreign relations committee
officially forgave Richard M. Helms, director
of the Central Intelligence agency, for his ill-
advised letter criticizing Sen. J. William Ful-
bright. Said Senator Mansfield:

*"None of us is perfect. Hell, we all make
mistakes. If we had to resign when we make
mistakes, the whole Senate would have to
resign."*

It is evident that Helms made a mistake,
and a rehearsal of history recent and ancient
would point out some of the congressional er-
rors to which Senator Mansfield referred. It is
quite true, moreover, that in many instances
the voters, without necessarily claiming any
quality of divinity, have forgiven their way-
ward senators or at least forgotten their mis-
takes by the time the next election rolled
around. Perhaps that is one of the advantages
of the 6-year term and one reason many House
members would like to have a 4-year term.

So Mansfield was quite correct in his obser-
vation. Under the circumstances, the Senate
committee certainly proved magnanimous. We
will assume that Helms, in so sensitive a post,
has profited by this mistake and will restrain
his letter-writing tendencies in the future. With
the pressure on, he frankly admitted his error,
voiced his regret and apologized. Whether the
average senator, similarly imperfect and
similarly prone to error, would be so quick to
confess error and mend his ways is quite
another question.